(iv) Court may allow a child to be given in adoption - (a) to a person irrespective of marital status; or (b) to parents to adopt a child of same sex irrespective of the number of living biological sons or daughters; or (c) to childless couples.

Ministry of Women and Child Development through Central Adoption Resource Agency [CARA] and its associated agencies encourages domestic adoption through publicity, advertisements, awareness campaign, etc.

**Child death due to malnutrition**

1195. PROF. ALKA BALRAM KSHATRIYA:
SHRI NARESH GUJRAL:
SHRI MAHENDRA MOHAN:

Will the Minister of WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware of recent malnutrition related child deaths in several parts of the country particularly in Madhya Pradesh;

(b) is so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether the role of NGOs engaged in providing help to undernourished children particularly in Madhya Pradesh have been assessed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI KRISHNA TIRATH): (a) and (b) According to information received from Government of Madhya Pradesh, there are no reported deaths due to only malnutrition. The State Women and Child Department and Health Department are constantly monitoring the causes of death of various children in Anganwadi Centres (AWCs).

(c) No, Sir. However, the State Government is involving International Organizations working for the cause of children like UNICEF, CARE etc. in various activities of the department like Bal-Sanjeevni Abhiyan, Project Shaktiman etc. from time to time.

**Stunted and underweight children**

1196. SHRI BRIJ BHUSHAN TIWARI:
SHRIMATI MOHSINA KIDWAI:

Will the Minister of WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the country has the largest number of stunted children and one of the highest number of underweight children below the age of five in the world, according to a latest UNICEF report;

(b) if so, whether Government have evaluated its programmes and schemes launched for the benefit of children;

(c) the reasons for poor progress in this regard as India lags for behind even developing countries in case of children's health and nutrition; and